

## Christian Doctrine through the Liturgy

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THIS is the sixth report on the teaching of Christian Doctrine in the Schools of the Archdiocese, which I have the honor to present to your Grace. During the past year I inspected all the schools in the country, and most of the metropolitan schools. The general level of the teaching of religion in your schools is very good. There are some schools where the reforms in method, which I have suggested in past reports and conferences, are slowly and gingerly adopted. The standard of work among the middle grades is excellent. The top and bottom grades are not so good. The chief weakness from the infant school to the lower grades is an unwillingness to use the kindergarten methods and to harness nursery ways to the teaching of religion. We want "Tusitala," the teller of tales, to take the place of the catechism in the lower grades. The leaving classes have not used their liberty to plan their own courses to the best advantage. We shall return to a prescribed course this year. My remarks of last year on the need of preparation for teachers of religion, on the necessity of professional aids and reference books, on the folly of sending inexperienced teachers into the lower grades, and on the remnants of the parrot system of memorizing, hold good this year also. The most consoling features of the year's work remain the splendid response of the children, and the growing anxiety of our teachers to better themselves for their great work as Catholic educators. That last sentence is a report in itself, and should reassure your Grace that the most important work in our Catholic schools is being done with zeal and efficiency. The message that I wish to convey this year is an appeal to priests and people, to teachers and children, to join the revived liturgical apos-

tolate, which seems to be the Divinely appointed means of restoring all things in Christ. I crave your attention and appeal to your patience while I present my proposed program in Christian Doctrine based on the liturgy. This proposal asks for a new attitude from teachers, and a different approach from the children. If I seem to be unduly long, I would remind you that I have not spared the pruning knife, and that the following pages form but a synopsis of the case I have prepared for the liturgy as the basis of a new attitude in the teaching of religion. I shall welcome gladly the comments of the priests, and the criticism of the teachers on this proposed program.

#### STEMMING THE LEAKAGE

Our faith is a practical one. It is a fact to be lived, not a theory to be learned. As practical educators, we must judge our work by the results apparent in the lives of our past pupils. Once again I direct your attention to the disturbing fact that many who went through our schools "walk no more with Him." Without accepting the full responsibility for these failures, let us see how our share in it might be minimized. Watching the times, we must prepare our children to meet them. We are in an age of transition that is questioning all its old beliefs and habits. For his own safety and for missionary work among his separated brethren, the Catholic child of today must be more firmly grounded in the truths of his Church, must know more thoroughly what he does in his religious life, and why he does it, and just what it means to the soul.

Leakage continues both in city and country parishes. It is always helpful to watch another face problems like ours. Within easy distance of the University of Vienna, a priest has been at work during the past ten years, and today he is the acknowledged fountain head of the liturgical movement in Austria. That has been the life work of Dr. Parsch, and the fruits of the idle hours of this professor of theology are amazing. Ten years ago Dr. Parsch accepted the task of placing the liturgy into the hands of the common man as the best means of halting and curing an awful and growing loss of faith. His little pamphlets, leaves torn from the Missal and the Ritual, and translated into German, have been scattered over all German-speaking lands, issue following issue like magic from his whirling presses. He lays

the foundation of his liturgical apostolate in the school, and then pastor and church assist its continued growth during the after-school years. Before each Mass in the parish church there is a short talk on the liturgy of the day. Once a week he gathers his people around him beneath the trees, and goes through the calendar of the week, which instructs his people in the daily use of the Missal, giving them an interpretation of the Mass.

### AN OBJECT LESSON

One little incident will illustrate the graphic concreteness of Dr. Parsch's liturgical catechetics. Dr. Parsch is seated among the children for the weekly lesson on the Mass. The first part of the Mass is the subject of instruction. The *Confiteor*, as an Act of Contrition, and as a plea for mercy, has been carefully explained. "Now, let me draw a picture of what goes on in Heaven when we say the *Confiteor* at Mass. I will sit in that chair for a throne, and act as God. Hilda, you stand there as the Blessed Mother; Bernard, you stand there on the side as the Archangel Michael; Joseph, over here as St. John the Baptist; you two, as Peter and Paul. Now all the rest will kneel with uplifted hands and say the *Confiteor*." During the first part of the prayer the youthful actors, impersonating the high courtiers of Heaven, were bidden to keep stern visage, but after the triple confession of guilt, they were instructed to turn and plead for forgiveness for the humble suppliants. The *Misereatur* and the *Indulgentiam* gave assurance of pardon, and all were happy and thoughtful as they resumed their former places. The instruction hour closed with a hymn.

The claim which Dr. Parsch makes is that the liturgical way renders Catholic practices intelligible, and therefore fosters their continuance in the after-school years. By forming a child for a visible religion in a visible Church, you train him to become a practical Catholic. The why-and-wherefore ideal, i.e., teaching children to understand the why of all they do and see done in church, has been stressed in my past reports. I now propose to those whose duty it is to watch over the religious upbringing of children, viz., parents, pastors, and teachers, that the surest and quickest remedy for minimizing the evil of leakage is along the path of liturgical education.

### THE CATECHISM WAY

Since the religious revolt of the sixteenth century, we have considered theological formulae as the chief things in the religious education of the child. Another bequest that has come down to us from the so-called reformers is that the collective and corporate worship of the Ages of Faith has degenerated into an individual and personal form of devotion that is alien to the Catholic mentality, and refuses to collaborate in a common work. Let me designate the methods of teaching religion that have been in vogue, and that are still current as the Catechism way, because the Catechism has dominated the classroom. We are foolish if we believe that the Catechism way has produced all the effects on the lives of the children that were hoped from it. One serious criticism that may be urged against the Catechism way, is that our children do not enjoy the way they learn their Faith. Joy is the daily bread of children. In the teaching of religion have we been as generous in dispensing that bread as we might have been? Joy is a most important pedagogical factor in moral development. Supernatural joy, the only joy that is really lasting, truly perfects human nature.

The Catechism way has failed as a school for character formation, because we have relied too much on homilies, failing to realize that because the application is apparent to us, it may not be so to the children. "Honor thy father and thy mother," is an easy Commandment to memorize, but it often happens that even the brightest child may not see its application to his own personal conduct. Specific instruction, definite practice, and freedom are necessary if we are to lead the child to build from within. "Concreteness," says a Catholic educator, "is not the most important element of the teacher's method, but it is the element most neglected in Catholic education of character today, and believers in the Gospel know what neglect even of little things entails."

### THE LITURGICAL WAY

Much of what we do as religious teachers has been written in water. We work hard, and yet the history of the after-school years of many of our pupils portrays a sad picture for us. If we were to seek an explanation we might discover that the divorce that exists between the teaching

of the Faith and the living of the Faith, between the religious lesson and daily experience, suggests one of the main reasons. Do the lessons on Christian Doctrine bear down upon the every-day life of the child? If not, how then can we bridge the gap, cement the bond between daily experience and the religious lesson? The parable method of Christ brought ordinary things back to His audience in a new light. Religion to the Jew was confined to the synagogue, and the affairs of life remained uncorrelated. Christ used the common things of life to illustrate his lessons. The people wondered at this linking of the fishes in the sea, the birds in the air, etc., with religious applications. When Christ had ascended into Heaven, the people were constantly reminded of His teaching whenever they saw the sower going out to sow his seed, or the shepherd guarding his flock. The liturgy offers to our teachers of religion a parable method wherein religion is associated at every turn with innumerable things. We see bread, water, oil, salt used in the administration of the Sacraments. The liturgical way will develop a religious complex in the minds of our pupils, and will unfold to the child the practical living application of much in the Catechism that lies in the child mind as dead storage. I am now advocating the liturgy as the best channel of making religious doctrine bear down upon life. It will do for our pupils what the parable method of Christ did for His audiences. The people saw the lilies in the field, the waving corn, and they were reminded of the religious truths associated with them.

The shifting sand, the lily flower,  
The lowly grasses, waving wheat,  
The cast-out salt, the scattered seed,  
The cockle growing near their feet.

The common things of daily life,  
He glorified where'er He trod,  
Empowering them (by speech Divine)  
To lead men up to things of God.

Christ obeyed the same principle when he made the humblest elements—water, bread, oil—the channels through which a life that was Divine was to flow from Him into man's soul. Man had strayed from God through the senses, and it was necessary to track him down the very ways in which he had erred. In the liturgy the senses are made the gateways to the soul. When the Church speaks to us

in the prayerful Gothic lines of medieval cathedrals, in the symbolism of her ritual, through the universal language of color, she would make sense the bearer of meaning to spirit. Through the visible form of her liturgy, she wishes us to discern the invisible things of God, so that while the outward symbols strike the senses, their deep meaning may fill the mind. The Church is a society composed of men, and since man consists of body and soul, and is moreover a social being, therefore her worship must be exterior as well as interior, and must be shared by all in common. The divorce between the theory and practice of religion is healed by the liturgy. It teaches the mind through the senses, the heart through the emotions, the individual through society. Pius X called the liturgy "the primary font of the Catholic religious life, and indispensable to the nourishing of it."

Note carefully the words used by that saintly Pope. He calls the liturgy the font, the source from which flows the strong current of religious life. The liturgy is more than the well-spring, it is the power that keeps the current flowing, fructifying the seed of faith that grows by its running waters until it blossoms, and finally bursts into a Christ-like bloom in our souls.

#### CONTRAST IN METHOD

The liturgy offers to the people the one complete form of religious experience. Children who approach their Faith along the liturgical way are helped to live the Catholic Faith, and not merely to learn its explanation.

There is a mighty difference between learning from a book and living through an experience. The same difference exists between approaching our Faith through the Catechism or through participating in the liturgy. In a preface to "Liturgy, the Life of the Church," the Abbot of St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minn., contrasts the two approaches:

The liturgy is the expression, in a solemn and public manner, of the beliefs, the loves, the aspirations, the hopes, and the fears of the Faithful in regard to God. It is not a cold, theoretical exposition of these things, as we have it in the Catechism and theological books. It is the product of soul-stirring religious experience; it throbs with the life and warmth of the fire of the Holy Spirit, with whose very words it is replete, and under whose inspiration it came into being. Like nothing else it has the power to stir the soul, to

vivify it, and to give it savor for the things of God. Its center are the Holy Eucharist, and the other Sacraments through which supernatural life and strength are imparted to the soul (p. iv).

### THE THEOLOGY OF THE PEOPLE

What Dr. Parsch has done for the people in Austria sufficiently establishes the claim that the liturgy remains today as it was of old, the theology of the people. In his own parish the people have learned to pray "with understanding," and through the increasing output of his whirling presses the people in German-speaking lands are living with the Church throughout the year. "We are leading the people back," said Dr. Parsch, to an interviewer, "after a long, long absence, to the Church's own piety and inner life." The Catechism way, begotten of the Protestant revolt, has dominated the teaching of religion for too long. We have expected too much from doctrinal instruction. Practice and habit are more important in religious education. The Catechism control has emphasized instruction at the expense of education. The child is not formed to the image of Christ by formulas learned, but by acts. "Christianity is not mere teaching of doctrine. It is, above all, living and doing" ("Living with the Church," p. xviii).

The Catechism way teaches religion, but teaches it as a theory, which the child frequently fails to put into practice, or to see how it may be applied to the concrete situations of its own life. A teacher of merit once said to me at the conclusion of the examination in Christian Doctrine: "Thank Heaven the Catechism examination is over. I can now teach my class how to love Our Blessed Lord." I saw exactly what she meant. The course of doctrine to be covered in the Catechism left no time for leading the children to Him.

Getting back to sound principles of education, we know that the best way to learn anything is by trying to do it, and we benefit more by our attempts at doing a thing than from many preliminary instructions on how to do it.

Religion is no exception. The child will learn religion not from the Catechism, which I might call the book of rules, but from living it. The athlete never develops by concentrating on the book of rules; he trains and tries, trains and tries, until he reaches the goal by repeated efforts. The Christian does not develop by perusing the Catechism text; he also must grow by living.

## CATECHISM VS. LITURGICAL WAY

Dom Beauduin, O.S.B., draws a contrast between the Catechism way and the liturgical way, in "Liturgy, the Life of the Church":

The Catechism teaches us that the Second Person of the Trinity was made flesh in the womb of the most holy Virgin. This is its formula, and it is necessary; but it does not suffice for the people and the children. However, we have the feast of Christmas, a Christmas eloquent of the past, with its cessation from work, its nocturnal or morning office, its three Masses, which narrate the whole mystery, its churches lighted up, its joyous chimes and chants, its naive cribs; a Christmas of long ago, with its echoes ringing at the family hearth and at the family table of the poor and rich alike, a Christmas with its accompaniment of Christian joy and life. This is our dogma as the Church speaks of it in the material language which we understand so well (p. 49).

The Catechism formula instructs, and instruction is necessary. "What is the Incarnation?" runs the Catechism. "The Incarnation means that God the Son, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, became man." The dogma is learned in this catechismal formula, but it is made vital through the liturgy of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany. The dogma enters through the door of the liturgy into the mind, the heart, the soul of the people with consummate pedagogical skill.

Nowadays the people do not read the works of the early Fathers; they do not study theology. Before the era of the Catechism, the people learned their theology by praying and living with the Church. The liturgy was then the Catechism, the theology of the people, and it remains today the most striking, most widespread, most popular, and most easily understood witness of our Faith. If we would teach theology to the children and the people, let us follow the example of Dr. Parsch in Austria, by avoiding treatises and unlocking the Missal and the Ritual. Liturgy more than catechismal formulas makes Christ real to the Christian. In fact, the liturgy is Christ; Christ praying, Christ lecturing, Christ in the Mass living His life again.

**"TO TEACH AND QUICKEN ALL"**

Let us be practical and ask: How is this to be accomplished in our schools? Our teachers must go back to the liturgy, and there warm their hearts anew, and then the children will catch the glow from the forge of their hearts.



There is no part of the Catechism or Bible History that cannot be linked with the passing year. "In fact," writes Bossuet, in his "Catechisme Liturgique," "if the Christians drew their spirit truly from the feasts, they would lack in nothing that they should know, since they would find in these feasts all the wholesome teachings, together with a multitude of good examples." Again, let me say that another defect of the Catechism way is that it influences the mind but leaves the heart of the child unmoved. The liturgical way goes straight to the hearts of the children, giving them something that instructs and grips at the same time. The words of the present Holy Father, contained in his Encyclical Letter on the Feast of the Kingship of Christ, leaves nothing more to be said for making the liturgical year the uprights around which teachers would twine every part of Christian Doctrine.

The feasts of the Church year are more suitable for instructing people in the Faith and for bringing the fulness of interior joy to their souls, than the solemn expositions of the Church's teaching office. For these expositions are generally appreciated by but a few of the learned; the feasts, however, *teach and quicken* all the people. The spoken word sounds but once; the feasts speak to us every year and at all times. Dissertations have a salutary influence upon the mind, but the feast days influence the heart as well as the mind, and thus grip the whole man. Since man is made up of body and soul, he needs the stimulating force conveyed by the feasts, so that his spirit may receive instruction from the manifold beauty of the holy rites, and so that these go over into flesh and blood and thus advance his spiritual life.

#### WHAT IS THE LITURGY?

The answer to that question is that the liturgy is the great school of the Church, which may be seen at work during the Ages of Faith before the religious revolt of the sixteenth century arrested its growth by the blight-laden doctrine of individualism. The voice of Pius X, calling us back to the liturgical life, re-echoes still around the Catholic world, and the present Holy Father is repeating that call to come back. The liturgy is a hidden treasure worth seeking. It is a Heaven-forged language through which the Church speaks to us. It is the normal and infallible path to a solid piety. History shows how piety seeking its nourishment elsewhere has lost the true Christian spirit. To follow the liturgy means to have one's devotional life anchored in, and drawn from the Church's own

prayer life and worship. To have a liturgical spirit means to choose the authentic rather than the self-invented, the general rather than the particular, to launch out into the flowing current of the Church's life rather than divert the running water into reservoirs of one's own making" (*Orates Fratres*, October 5, 1930. p. 506).

For centuries it was the vehicle of instruction. The people did not learn the supernatural truths through abstract statements. They prayed their faith, living with the Church throughout the cycles of her feasts. The liturgy did more than instruct; it was also the channel through which the life of the Church flowed into the hearts of the people. The passing year was a continuous object lesson on how to become saints. The people not only followed the life of Christ from Advent to Pentecost; but they also walked with His friends, the Saints, and saw in them models and examples. The Collect for the Mass of St. Ignatius, July 31, illustrates how the people were trained to view the Saints as mirrors, reflecting, each in his own way, some virtue that adorned the life of Christ, the Supreme Model: "Vouchsafe unto us that after battling upon this earth even as he battled, helped by his prayers, it may one day be ours to be crowned with him in Heaven."

#### THE MASS IS THE CENTER

If we adopt the liturgical way, then, the Mass becomes the center and core of all our work as teachers of religion. During school, and for the after years, it is the Mass that matters. "If I be lifted up," says Our Blessed Lord, "I will draw all things to myself." That promise is fulfilled in the Mass. The Mass is not merely the chief thing in our life—in a very true sense it is everything. The secret of all Christian life is union with Christ, and the Mass is the daily drama of our incorporation in Him. For every one of us, in our measure, the Mass must be a daily dying and rising with Christ, a sacrifice in which our whole life is concentrated and merged in His. The Mass is the center of our faith, it is the life-giving sun that effects in our souls a spiritual renewal. To its light and warmth we must each day present our souls, so that our union with Christ may be renewed and strengthened. The Mass is the hearth whence religion radiates. "The Church consecrates us daily to the glory of the Most Holy Trinity by means of the

Sacrifice of the Eucharist. This primary notion of the Christian life must penetrate into the very depths of our souls and vivify our every action," writes Dom Beauduin, in "Liturgy, the Life of the Church" (p. 26).

We must realize this truth first ourselves, and then only can we teach our children to appreciate it. The Mass may be looked upon as the core of instruction. It has been in the past the medium through which the Church educated the people. Mysteries and dogmas, Scripture and tradition, history and symbolism may be taught to the people through the Mass which is "the pith and marrow of each recurring festival. It is from the altar that the mystery is read to us. In each mystery our Holy Mother the Church shows us the fruit to be gathered from it, a virtue to be acquired, a grace to be sought, a sacrifice to be made which must be united in the one great sacrifice of the altar. It is in the Mass that we appropriate the mystery to ourselves, that we communicate in it, that we live it over again" ("Liturgical Catechism," McMahon. p. 195).

Through the Mass we can lead back the people to the Scriptures—the traditional food of the people. Our Catechism way has failed largely because it has minimized the Scriptures, and to ignore the Scriptures is to ignore Christ. A more extensive use of the Missal will achieve this reform.

### ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

The present Pope has merited the title of the "Pope of Catholic Action." We religious teachers form the vanguard in that march which our Holy Father has commanded. Let us ground all our efforts as teachers on that grandest institution of Christ, the Mass, and then our lives of prayer, study, and teaching become an immense Mass in which our share in Catholic Action is identified with the "Mystery of the Most Sacred Action." The Mass is the powerhouse of Catholic Action. Every act of ours should begin at the altar and flow back to the altar. The Mass is *par excellence* the *Opus Dei*, the Work of God. Father Busch writes:

There are certain prayers in the Missal which carry the rubric heading *infra actionem* (within the action). These prayers were originally placed outside the Canon, either before or after it. Later inserted within the Canon, they were marked to be said *infra actionem*. What a lesson here in regard to Catholic Action! Every work of ours, private or public, should be *infra actionem*, encom-

passed by the Eucharistic Sacrifice, should derive meaning and purpose and method from Christ who, when He is lifted up, draws all things to Himself (*Orate Fratres*, June 15, 1930. p. 357).

That the Mass may be for us the sun of our spiritual lives, shedding light and warmth and fruition on our work as religious teachers, we must look on the Mass as an action in which we, and the children we teach, must participate. One of the ancient names for the Mass was *Actio*. The present Pope calls for a more active participation by the laity in the Mass. "The Faithful come to the sacred places of worship to draw piety from its chief source by active participation in the Eucharistic Sacrifice. It is really necessary that the Faithful should not assist at the sacred ceremonies like outsiders or mute spectators." The Mass is a combined offering of priests and people. The social note in the text of the Mass, e.g., "we," "our," "let us pray," "let us offer," clearly indicates that. Watch the congregation during Sunday's Mass and see how far away the people are when the priest turns and says to them: *Orate Fratres*, "Pray brethren that my sacrifice, which is also yours, may be acceptable to God." The Mass is a corporate action. The people are present physically, but remain buried in their own private devotion. Most of our congregations at Mass remain audiences. The Mass is something done for them by the priest, not something done by them in union with the priest. They hear Mass by being present, but they cannot be said to assist at Mass. The spectacle that we witness in European churches has a message for us. In Italy, France, and Spain many Masses are said on different altars in the same church. Whenever the sacristan's bell announces the beginning of another Mass, there is a rustling of the combination wicker chair and kneeler, and some of the Faithful move bodily, kneeler and all, over to the altar, to attach themselves as closely as possible to the Mass about to begin. The admirable truth expressed in their gesture is that one is to attach oneself as consciously as possible to the sacrificial action, and to know one is doing so. Mass is something in which one must join. King Alfonso of Spain was said to have "seen" Mass daily. That is certainly an improvement on our "hearing" Mass. We are called, then, to active participation in the Mass, and that can only mean that we participate as rational creatures, knowing what we do, and willingly doing it. Active par-

ticipation will heal the rift in individual spiritual life, and bring people to see that the corporate worship of God which the Mass calls for, is the highest form of worship. Half of us is untouched by silent attendance at Mass. Of old the Faithful prayed their Faith. Their participation in the Mass was active. "It is the Mass that matters"—but it matters only in so far as we enter into it, take part in it, becoming co-offerers with the priest. The Mass will not produce its abiding fruits in our souls if we remain audiences, merely hearing Mass. Then our attitude is receptive, but let us not forget that mere passive receptivity never furthered any cause.

### HOW TO TEACH THE MASS

The Mass is an action, a purposeful activity. The Mass is an action to be performed, an experience to be lived. When we experience anything we do something to a thing, and it does something to us in return. Being present at Mass has little value as experience. Active participation is an experience because we enter into it in an understanding way. We live through the action. It affects us. It becomes as vital in our lives as it was to the medieval Catholics who acted the Mass in union with the priest.

As the Mass is an action, the best approach to it is through action. In "Some Methods of Teaching Religion" (pp. 242-265), I have indicated projects that have proved fruitful in teaching the Mass.

Abbé Spiritus justifies my recommendation of object lessons on the Mass:

In order to give a real, actual, and concrete character to the explanations of Holy Mass, I lead the children near the altar each time that I speak to them of Holy Mass. . . . I show them the altar, the altar stone, the tabernacle, the altar cloth, the chalice, the paten, and the vestments. I can tell you that never have I given these lessons without experiencing a deep emotion, a veritable joy. With what large eyes the children looked, with what respect they went up the steps! (*Orate Fratres*, December 1, 1929. p. 34).

### WHY THE MISSAL?

One of the consequences of the principle of private interpretation of the Bible has been the individualizing of devotion. The corporate community worship of the Ages of Faith was gradually submerged until we find it today gasping for life. When our people crowd the churches during

the greater celebrations, v.g., Holy Week, they come as passive audiences. The congregations at our Sunday Masses are mainly passive, or if active, each one goes his own spiritual way, one reads a prayerbook, another the "Imitation," another tells his beads, another moons the half-hour away. The sense of active participation as a community is lacking. One of the aims of the liturgical movement is to bridge that gulf which has yawned between the sanctuary and the pews. It aims at drawing priest and people into a closer union in an active spiritual life. The Missal is the main instrument for the fulfilling of that aim. The use of the Missal will lead people to pray with the Church corporately; its use will knit the people into a community praying the prayer of Christ; its use will lift our prayers above the level of mere private devotions up into the dignity of a people praying with the heart and tongue.

One cannot use the Missal long without coming under the spell of the community spirit that pervades it. It is distinctly community prayer, not mere private devotions. The ancient feeling of Christian fellowship, the consciousness of the one body of the mystical Christ, awakens in those who pray the Mass with the Church. They want now to do it all together (*Orate Fratres*, June 15, 1930. p. 350).

#### EFFICACY OF LITURGICAL PRAYER

St. Alphonsus tells us that one liturgical prayer is worth a hundred private prayers. When we use a prayerbook during Mass, we are helped by the holiness of the religious author who wrote those prayers. That is good, but it cannot be considered the more perfect way of attending Mass. Using a Missal we pray the prayer of the Church, and the prayer of the Church is the prayer of Christ. In the pages of the Missal we hear the Voice of Christ at prayer. When we use a Missal, Christ Himself uses us to voice His own prayer. That prayer is surely more efficacious than any private prayers, for it is really Christ's prayer. God cannot refuse to hear the prayer of Christ, His Son, pleading our cause. That thought must console all who neglect prayer because they think that God will not listen to such sinners. The Missal prayers teach us how to pray, as no other prayers can. They bear the consecration of the ages. For 1,300 years, virgins, martyrs, and confessors, the needy, the weary, the heavily laden, the

penitent sinner, the innocent child, the monarch in his palace, the prisoner under sentence of death, have found all the heart longs for in the very same words which we say today in reading the Missal. Why are these prayers so little used by Catholics today? Our people have not been taught to appreciate them, and have not been accustomed to make the Missal prayers their own. What more fitting preparation could one make for Holy Communion than that provided in the Ordinary of the Mass? Let us teachers of religion see to it that every child before leaving our schools may learn this great fact that the constant and persevering use of the Missal will save their Catholic Faith from becoming vague, flabby, sentimental; that it will educate them more and more in Catholic belief, and supply a strong support in times of trial; that it will enable them to come by a deeper appreciation of their holy Faith, deeper and deeper, until it brings them at last even unto the vision of God.

The Missal [writes Dom Beauduin, O.S.B., in "Liturgy, the Life of the Church"] is the living and authentic commentary of the great mystery, the language which Christ speaks in His Eucharistic silence. Without the liturgy, His Eucharistic reality is, especially for the lowly and the humble, something distant, abstract, impersonal, sometimes monotonous, if not tiresome. By means of it Christ emerges from the immobility and silence of His sacramental state; He acquires all the reality of His life of the Gospel: "Who hears you hears me!" I, therefore, give ear unto the Church speaking to me in the Missal; and in the voice of the Bride it is the Bridegroom whom I hear. It is He who prays, who speaks to me in the Gospel; and in all the Masses of the liturgical cycle it is His life that I am living again and His teachings. Every day the Missal presents a new Jesus to my soul, a new mystery, a new word, a new Eucharist. Like His disciples, I find the Master at the well, on the mountain, at the cross-way, on the shore of the lake, at Nazareth, in short, in all the phases of His earthly life. Thus understood, the Mass is an intimate trysting place for us, a living conversation, that is ever new, as it was for the disciples of Emmaus: "Was not our heart burning within us, whilst He walked in the way, and opened to us the Scriptures?" (Luke xxiv, 32).

The Mass without a Missal is for most of our congregations an endurance test, like the craze for tree-sitting, etc. If one were to attend a concert in a foreign tongue, and have no program, one could not be said to enjoy it very much. Mass without a Missal is meaningless for many who attend. How then shall we introduce the Missal into our schools? I refer you to "Some Methods of Teaching

Religion," pp. 261-265, for a few suggestions on overcoming the initial difficulties. The sooner the notion is dispelled, that it is hard to learn to use the Missal, the sooner will the practice of using the Missal become widespread and universal.

### IS IT PRACTICAL?

The question for us teachers is the practical one: can we lead our children along the liturgical way? The answer undoubtedly is *Yes*. The study of the liturgy will make Catholic practice intelligible for the children, and will foster its continuance during the after-school years. Like all worthwhile things, it demands the motive power of some idealists, who will first steep themselves in the liturgy and then captivate their children. In the Ages of Faith the liturgical celebrations in church sent their echoes into the home. Today we cannot rely on the home as then, and so we must strive to catch the echoes in our classrooms. From you teachers who shake your heads at this proposition, we but ask charity. A few harsh words spoken bitterly may destroy the dreams of an idealist. You may smile at our enthusiasms, but keep your words of ridicule to yourselves.

This practical suggestion requires time, patience, and perseverance. The collaboration of these three factors is necessary to achieve anything practical. Men of a single day are impatient, and cry aloud: *Cui bono?* The hand of time never respects that which men try to accomplish without it. Things of permanent value are achieved only in time. Let us begin by devoting Friday's period to the liturgy, and then gradually evolve a liturgical program in Christian Doctrine.

### A LITURGICAL PROGRAM

I request the teachers of religion in all the classes of every type of school to devote Friday's Christian Doctrine period to the study of the liturgy. If we use that one period each week we can make a very creditable beginning in our efforts to introduce the liturgical apostolate into our schools. I outline the following program, which teachers may find of practical value:

#### 1. *Preparation for Sunday's Mass*

The attention of the lower grades might be directed to



the Mass of the Sunday by setting them a few problems that are to be answered on Monday, e.g., What color were the vestments? When did you stand up first? What did the altar servers bring up to the altar?

The aim of our instruction is to make the children curious by asking them to observe certain things on Sunday. We send them to Mass with a question in their minds. By a gradual progression we cover the externals of the Mass in a school year. The middle grades might approach the Mass through an activity method as outlined in "Some Methods of Teaching Religion" (pp. 248-258). The higher grades should go through the Sunday's Mass in their Missals. The Missal habit must help the teacher by sending him to the explanatory and devotional manuals on the Mass for his Friday's lesson on the Mass of the Sunday. The Missal is not a book to be read, but as St. Ignatius says of his method of meditation on the ordinary prayers, we should ponder over each word as long as thought and nourishment sparkle from them. Did our Religious go to the Missal for their meditations occasionally, gradually the beauty of the Mass prayers and thoughts would illuminate their minds and send them back to their classes glowing with enthusiasm, and the children would catch the glow from them. If we would make ourselves, and our children, truly Catholic, let us root our prayers, our meditations, and our spiritual lives firmly in the Mass.

In one of our schools in the Great Southern there is a practice which I recommend to all schools, especially to country schools, where Mass is not celebrated every Sunday. The children are encouraged to go to Mass every Friday. The response has been splendid. This commendable custom, if adopted by other day schools, could make the Friday's liturgical period definite and practical. The opening few minutes might be spent in directing the children's minds back to the Mass of that morning, questioning the younger grades on what they saw and how they assisted at Mass; checking the older grades on their use of the Missal. The next few minutes should prepare them for the Mass of the Sunday coming.

## *2. Follow the Liturgical Year*

What is the liturgical year? It is an annual itinerary in which we are invited to walk along the footprints of Christ

from mystery to mystery. By watching the passing year we enjoy almost as intimate a companionship with Christ as that enjoyed by the disciples themselves.

Dom Beauduin, O.S.B., says of the liturgical year:

It is the life of Christ reproduced in the liturgical cycle, annually narrated in the Gospels, commented on in the Epistles and homilies, popularized in the lives of the Saints, rendered more efficacious by active participation of the Faithful in the holy mysteries—it is Christianity become concrete, condensed, as it were, and prepared for the nourishment of the soul ("Liturgy, the Life of the Church, p. 46).

If we, teachers of religion, propose as the aims of our lives, to lead the children to an intimate life with God, let us quickly learn that the best approach is by the liturgical cycle. By following the liturgical year, the child learns by a living instruction from a wise mother the truths and methods of salvation. Every truth she commemorates, every occurrence narrated, every event celebrated, is destined to produce in souls a sanctifying effect, a living practice of some virtue. By watching the passing year we lead children to feel with the Church, to think as the Church thinks, to act as the Church would have them act.

A chart that makes the liturgical year easily grasped by the eye would help. Have it hanging on the wall, and devise some means of indicating the Sunday that is being prepared for. Cut out the weekly Calendar that the *Record* publishes, and put it on a small notice board reserved for liturgical notices. Hang a copy of the Jesuit Year Book near by, and encourage your pupils to consult its pages for the Masses of the coming week. Let the weekly Calendar be the work of the children taken in turn (cf. my suggestions in "Some Methods of Teaching Religion," pp. 258-261).

### 3. *Unlock the Ritual*

The sacred ritual, which the present Holy Father in his Encyclical on "Christian Education of Youth," characterizes as "so wonderfully instructive," should not remain a closed book to the children. Lead them to appreciate the Sacraments more by object lessons on the administration of them, especially Baptism, Matrimony, Confirmation, preparing a sick room for the visit of a priest, etc. Read through the service for the dying, and the Church's burial service. Make known the origin and history of the sacramentals, especially

the scapulars, use of holy water, incense, relics, images, medals, indulgenced objects, the usual blessings, etc.

#### 4. *Explain Ordinary Prayers*

Take up each of the ordinary prayers, explain the wording of them; indicate the general idea of each prayer, and the doctrinal points implied in it. The child that realizes what he is saying when he says the Our Father, prays better in consequence. Much of the Church's teaching can be found in our ordinary prayers, e.g., see the Divine Praises, as a synopsis of Catholic dogma. Prayers are word-actions, which require frequent drill—a little at a time, but often—if the children are to do them well. Teach the Our Father and the Creed carefully and in detail. We can give a regular little course of lessons on these two prayers. Prayers in school should be short, and often changed. It would be an admirable reminder of the passing year if we selected prayers in school to suit the liturgical season, e.g., explain the *De Profundis*, and say it each day during November; say the *Memorare* in May; the prayer to Saint Joseph in October, the Divine Praises in June, the hymn to the Holy Ghost immediately after Whit Sunday. Preface the saying of the prayer by explaining why it has been selected to accompany this season. There are many prayers waiting to be popularized, e.g., Psalms, Canticles, hymns. Hymns are prayers, and there are so many of them that we should have different ones each month in school. Much of the poetry and charm of religion comes first through hymns. I appeal for a range of fifty to a hundred hymns for the elementary school. The child readily learns hymns, and enjoys the singing of them. Let us have a verse of a hymn to open the school day, and another verse to close it. Teach the meditative side of the Rosary through dramatization in the lower grades, and through pictures and story in the higher grades. Ask the children to attend to the prayer that is said after the Rosary: "While meditating on these mysteries of the Most Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may imitate what they contain, and obtain what they promise," and thus appreciate the meditative aspect as the most important part of the Rosary prayer. Suggest to your children that they make some of the Missal prayers their own by memorizing them, v.g., the two offertory prayers, *Suscipe Sancte Pater, Suscipe Sancta Trinitas*, the

sequel to the Lord's Prayer, *Libera Nos*, the three prayers before Communion.

### 5. *Link Parish Church and Parish School*

It has been my experience that the schools which give the best results are those where the pastor lends a helping hand in taking a Catechism class, in giving short instructions, in opening up the service of the altar to the school, in encouraging children to do things in the parish church, e.g., to sing Mass or Benediction occasionally, to answer the priest corporately at Mass on Fridays, to perform a Christmas mystery play, to take charge of parochial circulation of the diocesan paper, to canvass support for the Bushies' Scheme, to have a share in the parochial organization for raising money. The offertory plate should not pass by the children. Allow them to drop their pennies on it. In other countries there are special envelopes for children's donations to Christmas and Easter dues. That is a necessary training which we should not omit. Anything that leads the children to feel that they are part of the parish is worth cultivating.

The parish is the fundamental organization within the Church. It is the proper stage for inculcating people and children into the rich and colorful liturgical life of the Church. There is no need to go outside the parish to enter fully into the liturgical life of the Church. Within the parish unit let the children see the application of what they learn in Christian Doctrine. Bring the Catechism explanations to bear upon the child's life, make them practical by linking them up always with prayers, liturgy and conduct, keep the aim of a preparation for life rather than a training to face an examiner. The last year of the elementary school should be used chiefly to initiate the children into the active life of the parish, using the local organizations. Make known the field of the lay apostolate that awaits them, e.g., membership in the Children of Mary, the Sacred Heart Sodality, and other Guilds. At present there is no bridge over the sudden break between school and school leaving. The bridge may be built in the form of a school guild like the Knights and Handmaidens of the Blessed Sacrament, or a past pupils' Association. The first pier must be laid during the school days, so that the bridge may be swung

over the gulf, and thus provide a crossing on the day the children leave school.

Local needs, e.g., collecting for the Bushies' Scheme, looking up younger children for Sunday's Mass, and helping the parish priest in various ways, open up many avenues to children's cooperation in the parish. Why not ask the senior children to form a Mass club, where instruction on how to use the Missal might be given to parents and adults? I believe that the C.T.S. pamphlets would find their way into many more homes were the parochial school responsible for the C.T.S. box in the church porch. The closer the association of parish church and parish school, of pastor and teacher, of pastor and children, the richer the opportunities of preparing children to participate in the liturgical life of the Church.

#### 6. *Convert Thyself*

To enrol the children as members of the liturgical apostolate, we must first catch the spirit of the liturgy ourselves, and then the children will catch it from us. Let us begin in the kindergarten stage, and continue our efforts in the advancing grades to explain to the child all that he does and sees done in church, thus leading him to a keener appreciation of, and a more vital interest in, the worship of the Church. All this demands from us teachers that we begin with ourselves. We must go to the leaders of the modern liturgical apostolate for guidance and inspiration. Just as we place a copy of "Faith of Our Fathers" in the hands of our converts, so let us get into our hands a liturgical manual that we may begin our own conversion to the liturgy.

#### CONCLUSION

As the years roll on my sense of indebtedness to Your Grace, to the priests, and to the teachers grows with accumulating force. I appreciate more than I can express the confidence that Your Grace has placed upon me by allowing me a free hand to carry out my responsible duty to the best of my ability. I thank the priests for their open hospitality on the occasion of my visit to their schools, but more especially do I appreciate those priests who actively cooperate in the work by taking a class in the school. To you, teachers, you who bear the burden of the fight for the Faith, I can only send a little word, a simple word, but

like all simple things, a beautiful word: Thanks. Thanks for your kindness, thanks for your loyalty, thanks for your self-sacrifice, thanks above all for your humility in putting up with my many shortcomings.

## Power through Religious Teaching

MOTHER BOLTON, R.C.

*This article by a well-known authority on religious education, a Religious of the Cenacle, is reprinted from America, March 28, 1931.*

TO anyone who is following the religious situation of today it is evident that serious problems are confronting those who have been given authority in the teaching of religion to our children.

What shall be the content of the course of study? What is the minimum of preparation for the teacher and what aids will be given to increase this preparation for the teaching of religion? How much time in the day's program shall be allotted to the definite teaching of fundamental spiritual principles? What is the best method of presenting the doctrines of religion so that the child will receive the fullest profit? What textbooks shall be used to open to the children the field of doctrine in the most interesting manner, because of the great variety of avenues of approach? Shall the tests given to the children rate a definite number of facts memorized or the power and permanent interest acquired through the careful development of a few facts?

There are echoes from England telling us to omit or postpone the presentation to the child of the spiritual principles inherent in the doctrinal statements of the Catechism. Influenced, perhaps, by these echoes some Catholic educators in the United States are recently voicing the same opinion. But in the solution of the problem of religious teaching, should there be any indecision about the material to be used in the spiritual development of the child?

We know from history that it was through the assimilation of the spiritual principles inherent in the doctrines of Christ and taught by His Church, that sufficient spiritual power was developed in the early Christians to

counteract the pagan doctrines of the Roman Empire. We know that the doctrine of Christ has today the same latent power which it had in the first days of the Church. And do we not need the spiritual power which is developed from sound doctrine correctly taught in order to stem the tide of the infiltration of the Neo-paganism of our day? It is upon the children of today that the burden of counteracting Neo-paganism will fall. And the children of today have the same ability to grasp and assimilate spiritual principles as those of early Christian times.

Now why is it so very evident that by the majority of Catholics spiritual principles are poorly grasped, poorly assimilated, and interest in Christian Doctrine and Christian Doctrine teaching is at a low ebb?

We know that the trueness of the spiritual principles to be presented to the child is guarded by an infallible teacher and must be the best that can be given. But in our presentation of these power-giving principles do we violate the fundamental and recognized laws which are based upon true and sound child psychology?

If in our presentation of doctrine we are violating psychological laws, this is, of course, one reason why the children we teach are not assimilating and applying spiritual principles in their every-day lives. It is generally understood in the teaching of secular subjects that the growth in power and interest which the child receives from each study is of greater value than the subject matter. And the teacher of a secular subject is rated on his ability to develop power in the child.

Good teaching in arithmetic should make the child's intellect keen, strong, and interested in solving all mathematical problems within his experience. Good teaching in English should enable the child to think and to express clear and beautiful thoughts without grammatical errors and to appreciate the beautiful writings of others.

This means: good teaching brings power and skill to use the subject taught. And the gaining of power in arithmetic, English, science, or any other subject is a gradual growth which comes from the assimilation and application of the principles taught in these subjects. But an increase of power does not come from cramming or any other quick memory process.

So the one thing which would completely hamper or kill

the kind of teaching which would result in the child's growth in power in any secular subject, would be to make a teacher responsible for the results of a test which required the memorizing of more statements or principles than the teacher had been able to develop or the child assimilate in the given time.

If the gaining of power and interest in the subject presented is the principal value resulting from the teaching of a secular subject, how much more should it be the principal value resulting from the study of the Christian principles found in the Catholic Catechism?

When the doctrinal teaching is of such a character that the condensed doctrinal statements summarized in the Catechism do not function in the everyday life of the child, it is a disaster in the Mystical Body of Christ. For when these power-giving principles are just memorized and held in storage until an examination is passed, they do not usually enter into and color the life of the child. So with a large number of children this kind of teaching is of small value in staying the waves of sin and crime which are so evident to those who are interested in the inmates of our penal institutions. Other children through this kind of teaching are given a self-complacent attitude of mind which kills interest in the further study of the spiritual principles—taught by Christ and His Church.

When thinking this over, undoubtedly, many supervisors and individual teachers have wished to teach the doctrinal statements slowly, thus allowing time for growth in power—although in this way only a comparatively few doctrinal points could be taught each year.

But with a realization of the difficulties to be encountered and the fact that in their position they have not sufficient authority to overcome them—the majority have, perhaps with a sigh, gone on using the allotted time of the religion period—first of all to make sure that the children have crammed into their memories a sufficient number of doctrinal statements to satisfy the requirements of a course of study which demanded that so much spiritual food be consumed in so short a period of time that there was nothing left to be done but memorize it.

However, in the midst of a truth-obscuring complex concerning the teaching of religion there are some supervisors and teachers who realize very keenly that in the



cause of crime prevention and the spiritualizing of Catholic lives the doctrines of Christ must be so taught that children will be interested in them, assimilate them, and make use of them in the decisions of their daily lives. And these supervisors and teachers of religion are not perfectly content at seeing themselves placed in a position where they are obliged to choose between adherence to a course of study and the doing of an injustice to the child by pretending to teach Christian Doctrine so that the child will be prepared to meet the problems of life through the application of spiritual principles, when in reality, they are training children to inactivity of mind and will by requiring them, after a short explanation has been given, to memorize many doctrinal statements in preparation for the test based on the prescribed course of study.

This way of teaching the condensed theological statements found in the Catechism has been quite general for a long period of time and instead of fostering interest and power in children, it has been training large numbers of them to inactivity of mind and will. This is the reason why we find so many educated Catholics experiencing an inferiority complex and keeping silent when they find themselves in a position where they should intelligently and interestingly explain the spiritual principles taught by the Church.

If we want the future Catholics of the United States to be trained to power through our religious teaching, then we must begin our teaching by carefully developing only a very few spiritual principles, allowing ample time for their assimilation and for teaching the child how to make use of these principles in his daily life.

If the first few principles taught are well assimilated and made to function in the child's life, then in the following year he will be able to assimilate and apply more principles than the year before; thus there will be a gradual growth in spiritual power and in interest. And this gradual growth in spiritual power and interest will continue as long as the child is slowly assimilating and applying the condensed doctrinal statements of the Catechism. But growth in power and interest will be stunted if the teacher requires the child to swallow the Catechism statements like "pills" in order to satisfy the requirements of a test on the course of study.

# A New Periodical for Teachers of Religion

*The two editorials which follow are reprinted from the February, 1931, issue (Volume One—Number One) of the Journal of Religious Instruction, published at De Paul University, Chicago. They are here reproduced with the kind permission of its Editor.*

## THE JOURNAL OF RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

**D**URING the past year De Paul University issued monthly a sheet called *Notes for the Teacher of Religion*. This brief publication was produced as a service to the teachers of religion who were students at De Paul University. The sheet was sent gratis to all schools in Chicago and the vicinity, and to a number of priests and religious teachers throughout the United States. Numerous requests came to the University from teachers of religion asking for the assistance that a magazine might render; the *Journal of Religious Instruction* goes forth as the result of this demand. It has the approval of His Eminence, George Cardinal Mundelein, Archbishop of Chicago. The magazine will be published monthly from September to June presenting articles of interest to teachers of religion in Catholic elementary schools, high schools, and colleges.

The Editors would like to call the attention of our readers to the representing group of men who are members of the advisory committee of this magazine. The University solicits from them the keenest type of criticism of the materials that will be presented in these pages. In addition, the Editors of the magazine will welcome suggestions from the readers of the *Journal of Religious Instruction*.

## OUR PURPOSE

Up to the present time there has been no magazine in the United States devoted solely to the problems of Catholic teachers of religion. The several Catholic educational journals issued in this country have published monthly one or more articles on the teaching of religion, but due to the fact that these magazines are interested in many phases

of educational work, it is impossible for them to concentrate on the field of teaching religion alone. The *Journal of Religious Instruction*, in its presentation of materials for all levels of the Catholic school system, desires to meet a need that has long been felt by those who have made the problems of teaching religion a matter of particular study and investigation. However, if the purpose of this magazine is to be realized, it is necessary that the content presented each month receive a wide circulation. The magazine is intended for all teachers of religion. We ask the cooperation of all Religious and priests in the furtherance of this study of religious education.

It is not sufficient for the principal or an individual teacher in a school to follow the materials that will be presented in these pages from month to month. It is necessary that every teacher of religion in every elementary school, high school, and Catholic college face the many problems that are of dynamic importance for the attainment of the Catholic ideal of education. While it is the intention of the magazine to seek contributions from the foremost thinkers in the field of religion instruction, we do not ask our readers to agree with us or our contributors. However, we do ask that teachers of religion, without exception, unite in a study of the problems that are common to teachers of religion at the various school levels. It is not at all necessary that we be united in regard to materials and methods of instruction, but it is most essential that teachers of religion recognize the unsatisfactory results that much of present school practice is producing and the need for improvement therein.

The Catholic teacher of religion has God-given ideals to present to pupils and students. It is not sufficient, however, for the school to present these ideals; it is also necessary to guide and direct pupils in their attainment. It is the hope of De Paul University that this new publication may contribute to a better understanding of this important function of the school.

The articles that will be published in this journal will be the result of thinking, experiences, and investigation by classroom teachers, specialists, and research investigators. As was implied above, we do not ask our readers to agree with all the ideas presented in this periodical, but we do make a most earnest appeal for teachers of religion of all

levels of the Catholic school system to consider these problems with us. While the Editors of the *Journal of Religious Instruction* have definite ideas on the teaching of religion, the articles or reports published in these pages will represent as wide a sampling of thinking in the field as can be procured.